When the Heart Didn't Dictate

By Annette Angert

"HELLO," he said. "Where did you come from?"

The girl considered him coolly. "I might ask you that question."

He smiled amicably. "This is my 'Look-out.'"

"Oh, is it? I thought my father owned it."

"That makes no difference," he retorted, airily. "The ferae naturae wander where they will."

"That's Latin, isn't it? I never did like Latin. It means something wild, doesn't it?"

He nodded solemnly. "Wild beasts. I'm one of 'em. Besides this has been my look-out ever since I was a kid—younger than you—" he added audaciously.

The girl drew herself up stiffly. She was not of an age where she considered this a compliment.

"You are ancient, aren't you?" she retorted.

"I am old enough to know I ought not to be talking with you," he grinned.

"Why not?"

"Your people would be shocked."

The girl frowned.

"Then why do you?"

"Oh, I don't always do as I ought to do," he answered, lightly, "do you?"

"Generally," she answered gloomily. "I have to."

He surveyed her thoughtfully.

"You are to be married soon, aren't you?" he mused.

The girl flushed angrily until she saw there was no offense in the visionary eyes of this strange young man.

"How did you know that?"

"Bless you, child," he answered cheerily. "Don't I read the papers?"

The girl winced.

"Aren't any of us Americans good enough for you?" he asked curiously.

"I don't know," she confessed slowly. "I have never had the opportunity to find out."

"Good," he said, "you have the thirst for knowledge at least."

She was sitting on the rustic bench sheltered on three sides by the pines, on the fourth open to the sea. He seated himself calmly beside her. She had no sense of fear. There was something fine, open, clean, of the woods, of the sea, an absence of the cantamnia of man for man, about him.

"When are you married?" he asked.

"Tomorrow."

He was silent.

"How long have you known him?"

She laughed bitterly. It did not sound well this laugh, from a young girl.

"Known him! I don't know him. I have met him—talked with him twice—a full half hour each time with my mother and his brother."

His eyes were quickly turned to her. They caught and held hers and would not let them go.

"That is wicked," he said deliberately, and looked at the ground. It seemed so to her now— Wicked, that was the word.

"How old are you?" he asked as one trying to help her solve a difficult problem.

"Nineteen," she answered unhesitatingly.

"Don't you know you have a right to marry whom you will, then, in this state?" he asked.

"I—I—how should I know—what good if I did know? Who would marry me? Whom might I marry? Why, I have no right to think, even, for myself."

The man's eyes were troubled, more troubled than it seemed they ever ought to be.

"Listen," he said, "you must not marry that man. I know him. He is not fit for a decent woman. Bah!" he cried in disgust, "the pity of it!"

"That is easy for you to say, but what shall I do?"

"Do!" he cried, and his eyes blazed. "Do anything rather than have yourself sold to that bounder. Where is your spirit? Have you none? Aren't you worth saving after all? But of course you are," he added, "it is simply that you do not know. You have friends?"

"None but those of my family. I could not go to them."

"Well," he said, "the world is wide. You have money?"

"No more than the poorest shopgirl," she answered, "that I can lay my hands on."

He got to his feet and strode up and down before her. Covertly she noticed his finely shaped head and clean-cut profile, the wide shoulders and the lithe body.

He stopped suddenly before her and again those deep-seeing eyes held hers.

"See," he said and he held his hands apart. "I have a clean name and an honorable record. The women I have known have been good women and the men honest men. I have no love for any woman—nor do I think I shall. You are young, you are beautiful, but that does not matter. You are clean, pure, innocent. Now you have the making of a good and useful woman in you. Who knows what you will be when they are through with you. Come with me and you shall have my name. You shall have my money—as much as you need. You shall go where you like—once we are—once the minister has pronounced us legally man and wife. Your parents have forfeited their right to you. You will grow in spirit as you have grown in body—beautiful. And your life shall ripen as it ought and not become the beautiful shell they would have it." He stopped, waited, his eyes still on her.

"When?" she demanded, her face as white as her hands.

"Now," he answered.

She rose slowly to her feet.

"But I don't dare," she murmured, lowering her head.

He tossed his hands in a gesture of resignation.

"Years of dependence, of letting others think for you. Can't you understand that you are a woman, that you must think and act for yourself?"

She hung her head.

"Is it me you fear?" he asked.

"No," she answered, almost in a whisper, "it is myself."

"Yourself?" he asked puzzled.

"It is not right to marry without love—I see it now."

"But to save you from this."

"At your expense?"

"I give you that for which I have no use."

"Ah, that is the trouble—if you loved me—"

"But don't you see" he cried, "that would not help."

"Why?"

"Because you do not love me."

"I—I might try," she faltered.

Wonderingly their eyes met.

"Christine!" They started to their feet.

A formidable person was approaching down the path.

"Mother," the girl breathed, miserably.

"Come here at once," commanded her mother.

The girl turned to the stranger. "I—I am sorry—I must leave you. Would you mind telling me your name?"

He smiled sadly. "'Opportunity;' my given name is 'Lost.'"

And the Prophesy Came True

By Elsie Endicott

ALL during the latter part of her journey thru the strange, wild, bristling western country Monica Cone had wondered much about what she should find at her destination. She had not been able to build many expectations from the few letters her brother had written her and her own idea of mining life culled from hastily studied and inadequate sources.

From first to last the whole thing was an adventure. So far, Monica had only read of adventures. Her own life had been quiet enough. First, for years there had been the little side hill farm where she and Trav were born. They were poor, but somehow Monica had got an education. Trav had not cared for one. When their father died they sold the place and moved into town. Trav worked restlessly for a while, then he went west. Monica began to teach school and by her earnings kept her mother, as long as she lived, comfortably. After that followed several years of loneliness, of saving against the dread rainy day, of struggling to learn more and more. Suddenly came illness, the last thing Monica had believed possible, with red in her cheeks and light in her eyes Monica had doubted the doctor's stern command that she get into the open and live, if she would live at all. And all because she had a sore spot over one collar bone.

Where should she go? A letter from her brother, a little more intimate than usual, inclosing a worn $100 bill, his first contribution, set her thinking. Why not go to him? She told the doctor and he stimulated her resolve. Colorado was the place of all places. Among the pines she would recover her health.

So Monica wrote to Trav and Trav wrote back more or less lucid directions how she was to reach him. After that, nothing remained but pack needfuls and depart.

Now she was nearing the end of her journey. At 4 o'clock that afternoon the train paused in the sunshine before a rough station. About the station were perhaps a dozen houses. This was Starbird City. Monica stood on the platform staring about her at the dark, up-rearing mountains, the tumultuous creek pounding between the rocks and this dreary bit of near-civilization spawned by necessity. A road followed the creek and disappeared among the pines. That road she knew led to Trav's cabin. But where was Trav? She, however, felt no sinking of heart at his absence. He was probably late. She decided to start in hope of meeting him before she had gone far.

You can't miss my cabin," he had written, "it being the first, last, and only one on Upper Creek trail."

Monica left her luggage with the station agent, who indicated his willingness to look after it by a nod of the head. She had at first thought him dumb, but finally decided that he was merely shy. Obviously women travelers did not often alight upon that platform, especially young women travelers who were pretty to look at and wore clothes of distinctly genteel cut and quality. Courageously she set forth. She had no fear.

After a mile or so she came suddenly upon the cabin set on the verge of the creek, with an open space of turf about it. Some hollyhocks and verbenas grew beside it, and Monica remembered that she had sent the seed to her brother. Mingled with the joy of her arrival was astonishment that she had not met him on the way, and that she saw no signs of him anywhere. He had perhaps not got her letter. He would be pleasantly surprised then when he came home from his work and found her.

Monica opened the door and entered. The cabin was beautifully clean, but empty of all save the barest necessities. The one touch of decoration was her own picture, framed rudely, which hung over the low bunk. It, more than all else, assured her that she was at home.

The kettle was boiling and Monica stood peeling potatoes when she heard a step and glanced up. A man stood on the doorstone. He stared at her and she stared at him. She saw that he was young, brown, firmly made. Then it came to her swiftly that he was seeking Trav.

"Good afternoon!" she said, pleasantly.

He stared as if he had lost his tongue.

"Trav, my brother, isn't home yet," she added.

He seemed to wake up. "So you're Trav's sister?" he said. His eyes went beyond her to her picture. "I might have known," he muttered, flushing. He leaned against the doorjamb, studying the worn threshold. His head sank more and more. Suddenly he lifted it. "When did you come?" he inquired.

"About two hours ago," Monica replied cheerfully, going on with her potato peeling, "I wrote Trav to meet me and supposed he would. When I found he did not I started out alone. I had his directions. And, anyway, he said this was the only cabin up this way for miles. I knew I couldn't miss it."

"That's right." He drew a deep breath, looked away at the mountains and then back at her. "I—I sent you a telegram four days ago," he said gently.

Monica started. "You sent me a telegram? What for?" she demanded. "Who are you?"

"My name's McKelway—Larry McKelway. I'm—I was Trav's partner."

Monica went swiftly toward him. "What do you mean?" she breathed.

He stepped aside. "Sit down on the doorstep, Miss Cone, and I'll try to tell you." As she obeyed he added, "Twon't be easy for me to tell or for you to hear."

Monica lifted her white face. "Trav's dead," she whispered.

He nodded. "Dead and buried three days ago. The reason no one met you is—I thought I was in time with my telegram."

"Oh, my God!" moaned Monica, and covered her face with her hands. There was a long silence. When she looked up again she saw that he had turned his back upon her and was sternly regarding a flower that had pushed through the sod at his feet.

"What shall I do?" Monica asked.

"Why, you'll stay, now you're here. You can have the cabin and I'll go down the creek a ways to where there's a couple of fellows I know. You see, miss, it's just as well you have come. The mine has just begun to pan out. Trav's share is worth quite a bit, and it'll be worth more if you can hang on to it for a while. He left it to you by writing."

"I don't know anything about mines," Monica said. "But I can learn. And I'll hang on. But I can't drive you out of your cabin. I'm not used to living alone, anyway. I'll go down to Starbird City, to where I saw a sign for boarders. And tomorrow, when I am rested and can think clearly, you can come to see me and we'll talk things over. If you are as honest as you look and as I think you are, I don't see why you can't be my partner as well as Trav's."

She got up from the doorstone, put on her coat and hat and stepped into the trail. He looked after her wistfully, but he made no attempt to follow.

At the turn Monica looked back at him. It came to her like a prophecy that some day she would be going back to the cabin and to him to stay; she had found her mate as well as Trav's partner.

How Aunt Amantha Won Out

By Will Seaton

IF all the Blackwell family, Aunt Samantha was the most unimportant member. She was 68. She had never for a moment known the pleasure of being important to anyone. She was not altogether useless in her brother's family. On Mondays she accepted as her share the washing of the men's shirts, heavy with sweat and stiff with dirt from the fields. Tuesdays she stood all day pressing out a tiresome succession of towels and sheets, for she was never allowed to iron anything pretty, not even the baby's dresses. During preserving time she sat in a corner with the children and stoned cherries or hulled strawberries until her fingers were dyed red to the bone.

The Blackwells were not unkind to their aunt. They were very fond of her, but she was an old maid, dependent in a very busy family and was an insignificant figure in their lives. Even as a girl she had been clever at making bedquilts. During years of devotion to one art she had accumulated a store of quilting patterns.

She never knew how her great idea came to her.

Even when she finished drawing the design, she gazed at it in wonder, not daring to believe it was her own handiwork. Finally she said to herself that she would make just one square, just to see how it would look.

Accustomed to the most complete dependence on her brother and his wife, she dared not do even this without first asking permission.

With a heart full of hope, she approached the mistress of the house.

Sophia listened to her sister-in-law's petition.

"Why, yes, Samantha, start a quilt if you want to. I've got some pieces from the spring sewing which will work in real good."

Samantha tried to make her see that this would be no common quilt, but Sophia replied, with impatience: "Oh, there! Don't bother me, I don't care what pattern you go by."

Samantha rushed up the steep attic stairs to her room, convinced that she had invented a pattern beyond which no patchwork quilt could go. She had but little time; for she was too conscientious to shirk even the smallest share of the work of the house. She rushed through the work with a speed which left her panting as she climbed to her little room.

One evening she ventured to bring her work down beside the fire where the family sat. She was on the last corner of the first square and her needle flew with great rapidity. No one noticed her and by bedtime she had but a few more stitches to add.

As she stood up with the others the square fell on the table, Sophia glanced at it carelessly.

"Is that the new quilt you're beginning?" she asked with a yawn. "It looks like a real pretty pattern. Let's see it." And with that Sophia proceeded to look over the work. "Land sakes!" said the sister-in-law, looking at the many-colored square. "Why, Samantha Blackwell, where did you get that pattern?"

"I made it up," replied Samantha.

"Did you? Girls, come and see what your Aunt Samantha is doing." The three daughters turned reluctantly from the stairs.

"I don't take much interest in patchwork," said one.

"Nor I either," replied Sophia; "but a stone image would take an interest in this pattern. Land, look at all those tiny squinchy little seams."

The girls echoed their mother's exclamations and Mr. Blackwell came over to see what they were discussing.

"Well, I declare," he said. "That beats old Mrs. Taylor's quilt that got the blue ribbons so many times at the county fair.

The next day her sister-in-law amazed her by taking the pan of potatoes from her lap, saying:

"Don't you want to go on with that quiltin 'pattern? I would like to see how you are goin' to make the grape vine design out on the corner."

At the end of the summer the family's interest had risen so high that Samantha was given a little stand in the sitting room where she could keep her work—and work at odd moments. She appreciated this kindness, and through the longest task of washing milkpans there rose a rainbow of promise with her variegated work.

The family felt quite proud of Aunt Samantha. Minister Cressy and his wife has said it was as fine a piece of work as they had ever seen.

One day some strangers from the next town drove up and asked if they could inspect the wonderful quilt which they had heard of. Samantha's quilt became one of the town sights.

The Blackwells saw to it that their aunt was better dressed than she had ever been before and one of the girls made her a pretty cap to wear on her thin white hair.

A year passed and a quarter of the quilt was finished. A second year passed and it was half done. The third year, Samantha lay ill with pneumonia. For weeks she lay overcome with terror lest she would die before her work was completed. The fourth year came. One could see the grandeur of the whole design. And—in September of the fifth year Samantha quilted the last stitches in her creation.

The girls held it up by the four corners and they looked at it in solemn silence. Then Mr. Blackwell smote one horny hand within the other and exclaimed:

"By ginger! That's goin' to the county fair!"

The family agreed and one of the boys was sent to the house of a neighbor who was chairman of the committee for the village.

Samantha felt a pang of separation as the bulky package was carried out of the house.

One of the neighbors, who took the long journey to the fair, reported that the quilt was hung in a place of honor in a glass case in Agricultural Hall. But that meant little to Samantha, for she felt absolutely lost without her work.

The family noticed the old woman's depression, and one day Sophia spoke softly and kindly:

"You feel lost without your quilt, don't you, Samantha?"

"They took it away so quick," she replied, "that I hardly had a good look at it myself."

Mr. Blackwell made no comment, but a few days later announced that Thomas Wood, a neighbor, was going to drive Samantha to the fair and bring her back again.

"You don't mean it!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I mean it," he replied.

The next morning, when the buggy drove up to the door, they all stood together and waved good-by to her as she drove out of the yard.

On her return that evening she was so tired and stiff that her brother had to lift her out of the buggy. But her lips were set in a blissful smile.

She drew a long breath. "It was just perfect," she said. "You see, I went to the room where the quilt was, and while there the head of the hull concern come in and pinned 'First Prize' right in the middle of the quilt!"

The entire Blackwell family were pleased. Aunt Samantha sat by the fireside and mused:

"I tell you, it looked fine," and she sat, staring into the fire, and upon her tired old face was the look of supreme content of an artist who has realised his ideal.

At the Whim of a Hairpin

By Walt Gregg

LITTLE Mrs Bain sat weeping upon the letter she was writing. With one hand she guided the pen, with the other she frequently applied a soapy scrap of handkerchief to her nose and eyes. In two or three places the mauve ink had blotted betrayingly, but she wrote on unheedingly. The subject matter of the letter was so much more important than its appearance.

She was writing to Lucy Prentice, that tall, dark girl with the thick braids wound above her generous sun tanned brow, who looked exactly as her mother had looked in those far-off, happy girl-days which Mrs. Bain vividly remembered. Never a better woman had lived than Lucy Prentice's mother, and, knowing this, Mrs. Bain desired Lucy for her son, William. Twice she had had the girl pay her long visits. Latterly it had seemed that the match was going well and she had been happy as only that woman can be who beholds her heart's desire. Then William needs must go and lose his head about that flashy little widow. Eloise Van Why, who was divorced for six months before her husband broke his neck in an automobile race.

Mrs. Bain had brought William up according to her best knowledge. He was his father over again—powerfully built, gray-eyed, clear-skinned. She never looked at him without remembering how Wallace Bain had spoken and acted and smiled, and if anything she loved him more for that very reason. William was good, open minded and free hearted. To him all womankind was as his mother. But he was too young for youth to appeal to him. Tennis playing, wholesome, frank spoken Lucy Prentice was too much his comrade still for him to consider her his sweetheart. There was not enough romance and sentiment for him in a love affair with Lucy. But Eloise Van Why, with her ways and her wonderful Frenchy frocks and her ten years seniority fascinated him. He had thrown discretion aside and was plunging to his ruin, and Mrs. Bain knew it.

So she was replying to Lucy, who had written to her a wistful, word-blind little appeal for the reason why William had been so long silent and neglected. Had she offended him? Surely his mother could tell. And Mrs. Bain was telling gently, kindly, yet withal truthfully, as she knew she needs must tell that transparent soul, certain things which she could neither evade nor temporize with.

"She'll read between the lines, poor child, and I expect she will be heart broken," Mrs. Bain thought. "But suspense would be harder to bear than this hint of things as they are. I can't encourage her, because I can't encourage myself, to believe that William will ever change back. He's 24, and he thinks he knows what he wants; and he has quite a lot of money of his own. Eloise Van Why intends to marry him, and so—good-bye to my son! If I could show her to him as she is, the little artificial, filmsy fly-by night! And if I could show my noble Lucy to him as she is, by way of contrast! Is there anything so helpless as a man's mother when it comes to a time like this in his life?"

Another sob—another blot. She laid down her pen to repair the damage, when the door opened and William entered. He was fresh as the morning itself and a sight to please any fond mother.

"Dearest," he said, "can you be ready to take a spin in five minutes?"

"Anywhere in particular, William?" She kept her face bent over the eraser she plied. He must not see that she had been crying.

"Why, I'm taking Eloise over to Mrs. Coventry's, where she's due for a visit. It will be lonely returning alone, and I thought perhaps you'd like to go."

"Certainly I shall, William." She slipped the unfinished letter under the blotter and hastily made ready. A warm coat and a snug little hat equipped her, for it was a strong, blowy October day.

When she emerged from her own front door the car waited with William and Eloise on the front seat. Eloise looked very pretty with her flossy fair hair curling about her faintly pink cheeks. She reached forth a small hand to "William's dear mother," inquired tenderly about her comfort and hoped she would not feel lonely back there by herself.

Little Mrs. Bain's thoughts were too active for her to feel lonely. She scarcely saw the rich scenery as it unfolded about the flying car. She could only see that fanciful little head at William's big shoulder—that skilfully draped, coiffured and hatted little head forever coquettishly on the bob as Eloise laid fresh traps with sprightly conversation and laughter. She saw something working into view with fresh jolt and with every pulling breeze. Fascinated, her eyes clung to that hairpin. She remembered stories of how on tiny bit of mortar working loose and led to the crumbling of a whole dike. Once she put out her hand to stay what she perceived was about to become a catastrophe; then she drew it back with a tight pressing of her lips together. Her whole consciousness centered upon that little uneasy wire hairpin, which so evidently had business to perform, else it would not be there. A wire hairpin in Eloise Van Why's hair was as much out of place as a horseshoe hung on a rose bush in full bloom.

Suddenly the hairpin vanished. Simultaneously came a jolt and a fierce lash of wind. Eloise's white veiled sailor hat lifted like a bird and left her head hanging to it was a mass of fair hair. And under the hair was all to plainly revealed the reason for its being worn at all.

At Eloise's shriek William turned and saw. And as he saw Mrs. Bain sank back into the seat with a long drawn breath. In that moment she was as near death as she had ever been, for William almost lost control of the car. He plunged both feet against the brakes and they held in time to prevent them swinging over the dugway.

Eloise's hat and hair were dangling down her back. She had merely been scalped. The treacherous hairpin had been her chief safeguard against such accident.

Without a word Mrs. Bain helped the widow rearrange herself. Under her rouge Eloise was pale with discomfiture. William sat with his head turned away. He never looked at her again. At Mrs. Coventry's massive stone steps he merely lifted his hat in farewell. And all the way home he drove like a fiend, in morose silence.

While he was putting the car in the garage Mrs. Bain entered the house. She went to the blotter on the library table and, extracting her letter to Lucy, tore it into bits and flung them upon the glowing coals of the fire. She would not need to send it now. William was saved. In such cases the right woman was always turned to by the disgusted man. The revelation had been complete. And yet—

"I feel like a wicked, designing woman," said Mrs. Bain to herself, and her lips quivered for all their smiling.

Just Smiles

One Man's Wisdom.

"You really ought to have a better half," said the young widow.

"Yes," admitted the bachelor, "but the trouble is after a woman has been a man's better half for a few weeks she wants to be the whole thing.'"

Lucky Poet to Own Auto.

Tall Bard—Here is where an eccentric poet in Indiana writes his verses while spinning through the woods in an automobile.

Short Bard—Ah! I suppose that is what you would call the "poetry of motion."

Couldn't Tell a Lie.

George Washington, Jr., was trying to dispose of a horse.

"Is he a good traveler?" queried the prospective purchaser.

"He is," replied G. W., Jr. "I'll guarantee him to trot in 2:15."

"Trot a mile in 2:15?" queried the p. p.

"I'm not saying anything about distances," replied the owner, "but he'll trot as far as he can in 2:15."

Appearances Deceitful.

"Looks like rather poor soil in this part of the country," said the stranger.

"Well, it ain't," replied the native. "A man over on the adjoining farm plowed up a tin can with $50 in it one day last week."

Only Alternative.

Newed—I'm going to apply for a divorce.

Oldwed—That's too bad. Can't the trouble between you and your wife be patched up?

Newed—Not unless she gets busy and patches my trousers.

Strength of Mind.

Mrs. Oatcake—Your husband 'pears t' be a pow'rful strong-minded man.

Mrs. Hayrix—He shore air. I've know'd him t' read a patent medicine almanac frum cover t' cover without feelin' that he had enny uv th' symptoms.

Swipesy's Troubles.

Hungry Harvey—I ain't seen Swipesy since he stole dat pair uv shoes more'n a month ago."

Roving Robert—No wonder. Dey pinched him"

A Welcome Relief.

Said He—I sometimes feel as if I could die waltzing.

Said She—And every time I waltz with you I feel that dying would be a welcome relief.

Far Better.

"After all" remarked the patriotic citizen, "there is nothing better than living and dying for one's country."

"What's the matter with living off one's country?" queried the officeholded.